

VII.

THE ENDOWMENTS, POSITION AND EDUCATION OF WOMAN.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

HEMANS AND SIGOURNEY SOCIETIES

OF THE

FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL

AT

LIMESTONE SPRINGS,

JULY 23, 1850.

BY GEO. HOWE, D.D.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

LIMESTONE SPRINGS, JULY 24, 1850.

AT a joint meeting of the Hemans and Sigourney Societies of this School, it was

Resolved, That the respectful thanks of these Societies are due to the Rev. Dr. HOWE, for his kind and able Address to them last evening; that the Presidents of the Societies be, and they are hereby requested, to communicate the same to Dr. Howe, and request from him a copy of the Address for publication.

Respectfully, &c.,

M. L. TOLAND, P. S. S.

E. J. FARLEY, P. H. S.


TO MISSES M. L. TOLAND and } Pres'ts of the H. and S. Societies :
E. J. FARLEY, }

In reply to the request of your Societies, I need only say that the Address was prepared for their benefit, and if it is thought that its publication will be of any further service to them, and to the interests of Female Education at large, it is cheerfully submitted to their disposal.

Very respectfully, yours,

GEO. HOWE.

Limestone Springs, July 25, 1850.



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ADDRESS.

WE are met together, young Ladies, to celebrate the anniversary of your Societies; to lend you whatever encouragement our presence may give to your laudable efforts at self-improvement; and to bestow upon you that counsel which it is the duty and privilege of age to proffer to those who are rushing forward, in the confidence and hilarity of youth, to occupy those positions from which we who are here must shortly retire. The duties of life to all human beings are arduous, its objects are noble—each stage of its progress is preparatory to some other stage, and the whole a preparation to an interminable existence, upon which, in one sense, we are hereafter to enter, and in another, have entered already. Others may slightly regard the employments, trials and joys of the school girl. I am disposed to put on them a higher value. Our wives, our sisters, and our mothers were in the same position yesterday. You will occupy a like position with them to-morrow. Whatever of virtue, of patient endurance, of poignant suffering, of useful labor, of noble impulse, of generous endeavor, of influence exerted on society for its good, has been exhibited in their example, in a few short years we shall see exhibited also in yours. You will be exerting on society that influence which your own sex has always exerted for good or for evil, and which the position in which Providence has placed you, and the nature which the Creator has given to us all, secure inevitably to you. If we have aught of excellence and prosperity as a people, it is due as much to the noble women who have impressed their character upon their descendants, as to the noble men who despaired not in the day of darkness,

but breasted, under fearful odds, the storm of war, and turned in their favor the tide of battle.

We know not what scenes are now before us. If they are scenes of continued prosperity, woman is to be enthroned in her lawful kingdom—in the midst of that prosperity; if of adversity, in that adversity she is to be a chief sufferer.

While, then, we frown not on the lawful pleasures and sports of youth, and desire not to see, in the spring-time of life, that severe gravity which adorns the autumnal period that treads so closely on the winter of old age, it is right and fitting that our young friends should anticipate the future which is just before them; and, instead of devoting their energies, in the exuberance of their joy, to the pursuit of pleasure, to accustom their powers to effort; to discipline, improve, refine and ennoble those minds which are to be their means of success—the seats and centres of their enjoyment—and which are their real selves; to which the body stands related as a dwelling place, and an instrument, in which certainly their pride should not find its chief gratification, and towards which their partialities should not be principally directed.

That these views have already impressed themselves upon you, your association in these literary societies abundantly proves. They bear no resemblance to those assemblies to which so many of your sex and ours are devoted, in which hours are employed in inspecting the spots upon cards and nights worn out in the mazes of the dance. These are associations in which time is not wasted, nor health and morals sacrificed. Long known in academic halls frequented by youth of the other sex, there is no reason why they should be unknown, unmanageable or unprofitable in schools devoted to the culture of the female mind.

Without further preface, let us now address ourselves to the consideration of those peculiar characteristics which the Creator has impressed upon you, to the province in which he designs you to move, to the education which will fit you for it, to those virtues which should adorn you, and then search for

those encouragements and stimulants which the present occasion invites us to apply, to cheer and quicken you in the paths of knowledge.

It does not concern us now to dwell upon the different style of manly and womanly beauty, for it is the intellect, and not the person which now employs us. It is enough for you and for us that the Creator has cast you in his finest mould, and conferred upon you those attractive graces and beauties of form and motion, of which both you and we are sufficiently aware. But what are the intellectual endowments and what the moral sentiments which characterise the fairer portion of the human race? It would be exceedingly *unfair* if we should resort to those barbarous tribes where woman is made the slave of man, in order to resolve this question. Long continued degradation transmits its benumbing effects, by causes, physical as well as moral, from parent to child, and there is a continual sinking of human nature to lower and still lower depths while these unfavorable influences operate. We should rather have recourse to those regions and nations where all the causes have combined to elevate her position in society, and where she appears most instinct with knowledge and most invested with power.

But, first, let us enquire whether the slightness and delicacy of her frame, which point her out as inferior to man in strength, and him as the one destined to rule on the earth, and to venture forth in enterprises of hazard, implies at the same time any inferiority, on her part, of mental vigor. If any one insist on this point, upon phrenological tests, at best exceedingly dubious, it may be asserted that the brain of man is larger and heavier than that of woman, and that therefore he must be her superior. But it may be replied that absolute size of brain is no sure test of native ability, and that if so, the brain of woman is said by some to bear a greater proportion to her size than that of man to his.* So that she should be, according to this, more intellectual than he.

*Solly on the Brain, pp. 150, 154. So also Tiedemann and the Wenzels.

But, passing away from these material tests, in which we have little faith, let us enquire of experience what light it can shed upon the point of her native endowments. And we resort to those nations where her social position is the highest, to the Teutonic nations of Western Europe and European America. In the East and the still more barbarous West she has been the slave of man ; but in these portions of the earth she has enjoyed various influences which have tended to her advantage. In the first place, the German or Teutonic nations had originally, as Tacitus, the Roman historian, testifies, a higher appreciation of female worth than any other merely Pagan people. From what causes this arose, it is at this day vain to enquire. Though there has been a downward progress of man in all barbarous nations, it has not been the same in all ; and among these, more of that early civilization which adorned the first ages may have been preserved, than among others. The Romans were far in advance of the Greeks in their appreciation of woman, and the Roman influence extending over Western Europe doubtless assisted in giving her her true position in society. At last came Christianity, breaking her bonds, and restoring her to her natural rights, teaching us that she was "taken from man," and created to be "his help ;" and that men were "to love their wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it ;" "to love them as their own bodies," and to bestow the more abundant honor upon them in proportion to their feebleness and dependence, even as the chrystal vase, of inestimable price, is tenderly and gently handled, in proportion as it is frail in its material and valued by its possessor.

In the age of chivalry, when mad lovers, now knelt in despairing adoration before some disdainful maid, and now sallied forth in hair-brained adventure to win her smile, we see this admiration of woman carried to a high and ludicrous idolatry, and the worshipped and the worshipper alike infatuated and unfitted for the sober realities of life.

That age has passed away, but though there are defects even

yet in the education of your sex, we are better able to appreciate her character at its just value. In strength of intellect, and in ability to sustain long continued mental effort, we suppose the palm of superiority must be awarded to man. In power of will, in concentration of effort, in decision of character; and in tenacity of purpose,—in ability, therefore, to rule, as he was appointed to do by God, to control untoward events, and accomplish, after long toil and conflict, the plans he has devised, we suppose it cannot be regarded aside from truth, that man should be allowed the preëminence.

To woman, on the other hand, there must be ascribed greater acuteness in her powers of perception, stronger instincts and deeper and quicker emotions. When these are powerfully excited there is a wonderful vigor and determination of will, and a ready discovery of expedients to accomplish her wishes. She has readier sympathies, her fountain of tears is nearer the surface, but her emotions may not be so constant and permanent as those of man. She has greater readiness and tact, purer and more noble and unselfish desires and impulses, and a higher degree of veneration for the virtuous and exalted; and when she has found the way of truth, a heart more constant and more susceptible to all those influences which come from above.* To the gentleness and quiet of her nature, to its affection and sympathy, that religion which pronounces its benediction on the peace-makers and the merciful, which recommends to them the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of the Lord, is of great price, addresses itself with more force and greater attraction than it addresses man. Born to lean upon others, rather than to stand independently by herself, and to confide in an arm stronger than hers, her mind turns more readily to the higher power which brought her into being,—and while the mind of man is harassed and distracted by the pursuits of ambition, she turns with more of instinct to Him on whom we all at times feel ourselves obliged to lean, because on Him we are all dependent, Him even,

*See note A.

who is God over all and blessed forever. We believe her heart to be no less depraved than ours and to need no less the influences of victorious grace to change its bias and set it right towards God. Still we are willing to adopt, in some sense, the beautiful language of an accomplished writer;* who declares his belief, "that if Christianity should be compelled to flee from the mansions of the great, the academies of the philosophers, the halls of legislation, or the throng of busy men, we should find her last and purest retreat with woman at the fire side; her last altar would be the female heart; her last audience would be the children gathered round the knees of a mother; her last sacrifice, the secret prayer escaping in silence from her lips, and heard perhaps only at the throne of God."

In all this we see how wonderfully adapted she is to supply what is wanting in man, to the full and most perfect discharge of the duties devolved upon him, and to the possession of the good which the all-wise Creator has set before him. The other animals were created independent of each other; not so our noble race. Adam was first created, then Eve, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; she never to have the full impulses of her nature drawn forth, nor to reach her full perfection independently of him, and he never to attain refinement of feeling, and gentleness of manners—never to have the more tender and lovely emotions of his nature evoked from their dormancy without her—never, in fine, to possess those amiable and winning ways which lend a charm to society in Christian lands.

Providence, then, and her own endowments mark out the proper province of woman. In some cases she may strive for the mastery, but to rule with the hand of power was never designed for her. When she thus unsexes herself she is despised and detested by man and woman alike. England's Queen at the present moment, if not more feared, is far more beloved in the quiet of her domestic life, than Elizabeth was, the most talented of her female Sovereigns. How unlovely does she

*Rev. Joseph Buckminster.

appear when she demands from the Bishop of Ely a piece of ground for one of her favorites, and on being refused, because the land, belonging to the Church, was beyond the Bishop's disposal, orders him peremptorily to yield up the land, and tells him with a profane oath, which would almost disgrace a pirate, "Proud Prelate, I made you and I'll unfrock you."* And again, when she forbids Grindal from having so much preaching in his diocese, and on his remonstrating that preaching was the ordinance of God, suspending him from the exercise of his Episcopal functions, and making him prisoner for years in his Episcopal palace.†

When women go about haranguing promiscuous assemblies of men, lecturing in public, either on infidelity or religion, on slavery, on war or peace — when they meet together in conventions and pass resolutions on grave questions of State — when they set themselves up to manufacture a public opinion for their own advantage and exaltation — when they meet together in organized bodies and pass resolutions about the "rights of woman," and claim for her a voice and a vote in the appointment of civil rulers, and in the government, whether of Church or State, she is stepping forth from her rightful sphere and becomes disgusting and unlovely, just in proportion as she assumes to be a man. Occasions have occurred, when, under a rare combination of circumstances, she has filled such places without creating a revulsion of feeling. Boadicea may with propriety have led her armies to battle, the Maid of Orleans may have been justified in inspiring her country's forces with martial valor, and appearing in the garb of a soldier, and the distresses of their families may have called forth those who were before retiring and gentle, to assume the businesses of men. But it suits not our sense of propriety when we see her voluntarily assuming these positions in society; and where it is most frequently done, as in France, there is less of delicacy, less of purity, less of high moral elevation, and less also of real power

* Hume's *England*, App. III, Note 51. † Strype's *Life of Archbishop Grindal*.

to control society, than where, as in England, Germany, and America, woman retires from public view, and sends forth her influence in secret to mould the manners, refine the taste, and ennoble the character of man. Nature, herself, dictates to us that she should not hold the plough, wield the hammer of the smith, push the plane of the carpenter, swing the scythe, mount the box of the coachman, load the cannon, mingle in the melee when the trumpet sounds the charge, and that her shrill notes should not be heard in the deliberations of Senates, or in the forensic strife of courts of justice. "I suffer not," says the judicious as well as inspired Apostle, "the women to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve." "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak. If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." And not only does revelation thus adjust the relative position of woman in society, it is the common judgment of the civilized world. It is every where the greatest reproach, not involving a decided immorality, when a man is stigmatized as a woman, and when also the woman is stigmatized as a man, a feminine man and a masculine woman are alike regarded with contempt or displeasure.

She has her true, her legitimate sphere, and it is sufficient for her that her influence, like that of the sun and the dew and most of the blessed influences of the earth, is powerful though noiseless — sufficient for her that though her voice be not heard in the tops of the streets and the places of public concourse, she yet rules over more than half the world. Besides her influence over her own sex, she is continually impelling ours to deeds of virtue and charity, and her power, her example, discipline, instructions and maternal love, mould us all in childhood, and set us forward in that path of honor and usefulness in which we move. Almost every great and noble man has en-

joyed the teaching and example of a noble mother. "The mother of the Gracchi" is even more distinguished in history than her noble sons, the name of Monica will live with that of her wayward, lost, but afterwards reclaimed, and world-renowned Augustine, and "the mother of Washington" has reared to herself an imperishable monument in the care she bestowed, in her widowed state, on the education of him who afterwards became the father of his country, and whose noble virtues, nurtured by her maternal wisdom, have contributed so greatly to our character and glory.

But how, young ladies, shall you be prepared to meet these high responsibilities which are rushing upon you? Not, truly, by heedless and careless living. Not by wasting in indolence or wearing out in pleasure this morning of your days. Not by escaping, by every shift your inventive imagination can suggest, the claims of daily duty. Not by indulging appetite, nor nurturing passion, nor living in a world of romance rather than of reality. Not by devoting yourselves to the adorning of your persons, nor by believing the flatteries of lovers, or the false praises of some lying poet. You are not to live in the clouds, to dwell among the stars, nor to have around you elysian scenes. You are to live in this plain, practical world, a world of sufficient sources of happiness, but a world of trials, disappointments, self-denial and toil. Duties will come all too soon, clustering thickly around you — duties of friendship, duties of society at large, duties numerous and urgent, growing out of relations yet to be formed, which you must either meet and discharge, or must neglect to your unhappiness in life and your everlasting undoing. These duties you must face with a true heart and a heroic courage, striving to win the approbation of the good and the favoring testimony of an enlightened conscience. Can you do it if you have only the will, but want the power? How can you discharge the various duties of domestic life? How be the light, the joy, the ornament of that home you should adorn? How be the instructors, as you must of necessity become, of

the millions that are to succeed us, at the most inquisitive period of their lives? How be the self-possessed and intelligent ladies presiding over the households of the land, and doing those honors to the transient visitor and guest, in which so much of the pleasure of civilized society consists? How contribute gracefully and winningly your share to the beneficent deeds which in all ages have characterized your sex, and which the spreading light of Christianity, and the unfolding prophecies of God will require in the generations to come, in a still more eminent degree!

Can you do all this and be all this just as you grow, sleep, and breathe, without volition and effort. Does beauty of mind, if the expression be not disallowed, come like beauty of person? and the rich heritage of knowledge and wisdom, as sometimes comes the heritage of wealth? These things are indeed, like all things else, the gift of God, but those on whom God bestows them he leads on to their possession through the path of self-denial and toil. He helps none on who will not help themselves. Waste these golden moments of your youth, devoted to the discipline of your powers and the acquisition of knowledge, and you will sigh over it, with one long sorrow, when you feel hereafter the want of that which you are sent here to gain. Beauty will fade, the round of fashionable amusements tire with repetition, but there is a youthful vigor in the mind which outlasts all these inferior things, which fascinates the beholder, and to the mind itself is its own perpetual feast.

Do you then ask in what direction your efforts shall be put forth, and what is the course of study and training you should pursue? Has not the experience of ages satisfied this question? Has it not been discovered what sciences, what literature, what knowledge most invigorate the powers, expand the faculties, improve the reason, refine the taste, and fit us for the practical duties of life? Have colleges, universities and schools been so long taught, and this discovery not yet been made? And why not the same studies which discipline the mind of man discipline also the mind of woman? The same

knowledge which satisfies the cravings of his curiosity satisfy also the cravings of hers, and the same which opens to him the stores of wisdom, open them also to her? If the study of mathematics is useful to concentrate thought, if it aid in acquiring habits of fixed attention and consequential reasoning, why should she not enjoy these advantages as well as man. If the study of the languages improves the memory, aids in forming habits of nice discrimination, in understanding the laws of speech, makes us better acquainted with our own tongue and more observant of its true beauty, if it gives us a greater affluence and purity of diction, and opens to us new and continually new fields of knowledge, why should not she enjoy also such benefits as these. And if the studies of natural science make her a more admiring and intelligent observer of the works of the Creator, and surround her, wherever she travels or abides, with sources of gratification and knowledge, why should she not enter these fields and survey them, and thread her way with something of philosophic enthusiasm through these mazes up to the throne of the Eternal! If a knowledge of man in his wanderings and migrations, in his various degrees of culture or barbarism, and in the external circumstances of climate and geographical position, which have affected him mentally and physically so much, is interesting to any, why not to her? And if the history of the past brings to us lessons of wisdom, if it moderates our pride by teaching us the glories, virtues, and exploits of other ages, if it points out to us the quicksands on which men and nations have been stranded and warns us to avoid them, if it stimulates us by the sufferings and successes of others, and opens before us the vista of the future, why should not the genius of history take her also under his tutelage and teach, animate, and warn her by the examples of the past?

Except that some greater portion of time may well be devoted by her to those accomplishments which give a finish and perfection to a well educated woman, we see not why her education should not substantially be the same as that of man.

She will of course pursue it with a view to the station she is to occupy, and give precedence to those parts which will most avail her there. But all accomplishments where there is nothing to adorn, all outside show where there is no substantial knowledge and intellect to sustain it, what is it like? a splendid gateway that leads to nothing; the apples of Sodom, all beauty without, all ashes, smoke and disappointment within.

Some of those fine young ladies, who flaunt in satins, would not adventure to set the sole of their foot on this vile ground, for delicateness, and are the cynosure of all eyes, are unwittingly guilty of the most absurd blunders. If asked, they would perhaps say that the battle of Waterloo was fought by Alexander the Great, and that of Marathon by Napoleon Bonaparte—would locate St. Petersburg in Virginia, and Archangel in Labrador—would set the inhabitants of Rio Janeiro to freeze in Lapland, and Spitzbergen to thaw beneath the equator—would make Peter the Hermit—were not the affair so recent, the hero of Buena Vista, and Ghengis Khan, court preacher to Louis XIV.

But do you ask how you shall acquire this knowledge and culture? By little and little, even as the ant builds the mole-hill, or the coral insect rears the islands in mountain height which she founds in the lowest depths of the sea. These are all “a feeble folk,” but “they go forth in bands,” and those structures which they rear, put the pyramids, the obelisks, and the temples of man to the blush. Though the labour of your education is to be performed by yourselves, and can be directed only, not accomplished, by others, it is not to be done in one day, month, or year. What at any stage is defective, is to be supplied by new and separate efforts, which will become more and more pleasant the longer they are pursued. Nor is it necessary or desirable to settle in life as early as some young persons do, nor wise and fitting to throw aside the pursuit of knowledge, and the discipline of mind and heart, when the cares of life thicken around you, as is too often done. Whatever be the cares and trials of life, hours, or parts of hours may

yet be found, not only for self-recollection and the private duties of religion, but to enlarge still wider the horizon of your intellectual vision, and to furnish the materials of profitable thought.

You will not suppose that this course is recommended to you, that you may shine as literary women, or female pedants ; that, devoted to books, you should neglect the cares of the household, and the acquisition of that skill which fits woman for those domestic duties in which the greatest part of her life is to be employed. We do not expect the mistress of a family always to discourse philosophy or to point her speech with Greek and Latin epigrams, to neglect the rule of her house, the ordering of her table, the education of her children, the control of her servants, that she may pore over Virgil and Cicero, Shakspeare and Homer. The most literary husband is most perfectly disgusted with so learned a fool. He begins to find, when all things are in confusion around him, that there is something in the world useful besides books, and room for thought, invention and reason in the more ordinary affairs of life. It is that she may better succeed in them and in those situations in which Providence shall place her, that we would have her cultivate her mind ; that she may be a better daughter, sister, mother, wife, and that in all the duties which these relations call on her to perform, there may be manifested the high reason and skill of the intelligent, noble, and cultivated woman, rather than the mere instincts which are found in highest perfection in the brutes beneath. She will thus be nobly fitted for any station to which God may call her. If she be wedded to a studious man, she may share in her own degree in the enthusiasm of his pursuits—if otherwise, her good sense will guide her aright, and if perchance she should be unentangled by engrossing cares, she may join the company of noble women who have instructed mankind ; for the names of your sex are not few who have stood high on the roll of fame, nor the productions of female genius unworthy the exalted

position you hold as the cherished and heaven-sent companion of man.*

Yet not till Christianity shone upon you, did your sex claim a place in the annals of literature. A few there were among the Greeks who attracted the orators and philosophers of antiquity by the charms of their genius no less than by those of their persons. One of them alone, Sappho, wielded the pen of the writer, and but a fragment or two of what she wrote remains.† Of their moral character nothing can be said that would not crimson the cheek of virtue. But when Christianity shone on the world, woman felt its ennobling influence and sprang to her place by the side of man. Anna Comnena celebrated the fame of her father the Emperor Alexias, and holds her place among the Byzantine historians; and in later times, Madame Dacier, Sevigné, Guyon, de Genlis and de Staehl; Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Barbauld, Elizabeth Smith, Elizabeth Hamilton, Jane Taylor, Maria Edgeworth, and Hannah More; Mrs. Somerville among the students of physical science and the mathematics, Charlotte Elizabeth in religious history and romance, and your own Mrs. Hemans and Sigourney, under whose guiding star you have marshalled yourselves, form a constellation in the moral firmament of no common magnificence and beauty.

Shall we name now, young Ladies, in conclusion, those principal virtues which we think should adorn you? We expect then to find in woman that outward delicacy and grace in every action, which indicates purity, delicacy, and moral beauty dwelling within. The outward aspect, mien and motion move us mainly because we associate them with some moral beauty of which we deem them the signs. We would see you adorned with those graces which the greatest of poets ascribes to our first mother as she came from the hand of God.

"On she came,
Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen,—
Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love."

*Note B. †Note C.

We expect to find in woman wisdom and discretion. That we have required of her a cultivated mind you have seen already. But learning is not wisdom, nor a cultivated understanding discretion. "Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion." But where there is wisdom, knowledge and virtue, the nameless charms of woman give her resistless power.

"When I approach
Her loveliness,"

says Adam, in the *Paradise Lost*,

"So absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows;
Authority and Reason on her wait;
————— and to consummate all,
Greatness of mind, and nobleness their seat,
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic placed."

We expect to find her industrious. These very attainments imply it. Not only these, the duties of domestic life demand it. "Who can find," says the mother of King Lemuel, in the writings of Solomon,

"Who can find a virtuous woman?
For her price is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,
So that he shall have no need of spoil.
She will do him good and not evil,
All the days of her life.
She seeketh wool and flax,
And worketh willingly with her hands.
She is like the merchant's ships;
She bringeth her food from afar.
She riseth also while it is yet night,
And giveth meat to her household,
And a portion to her maidens."

She considereth a field, and buyeth it :
 With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
 She girdeth her loins with strength,
 And strengtheneth her arms.
 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good :
 Her candle goeth not out by night.
 She layeth her hands to the spindle,
 And her hands hold the distaff.
 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor ;
 Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
 She is not afraid of the snow for her household ;
 For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry ;
 Her clothing is silk and purple.
 Her husband is known in the gates,
 When he sitteth among the elders of the land.
 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it ;
 And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
 Strength and honor are her clothing ;
 And she shall rejoice in time to come.
 She openeth her mouth with wisdom ;
 And in her tongue is the law of kindness.
 She looketh well to the ways of her household,
 And eateth not the bread of idleness.
 Her children arise up, and call her blessed ;
 Her husband also, and he praiseth her."

This description of a virtuous — i. e. of an *able* woman, as the word truly means — has often been quoted, and will continue to be till the end of time. It was composed by the mother of King Lemuel, in the acrostic form, each line beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, that it might easily be learned by heart and retained in memory. It has been embalmed in the pages of inspiration — is a monumental description of what was regarded an *able woman* 2500 years ago, and was doubtless given to King Lemuel as a guide to him in his search after one worthy to share his affections, his palace, and his throne. The princesses of other ages wrought with the needle and at the loom — those of modern times may despise this manual toil. Industry may now assume another form. But the spirit of the description answers for all times, and plain republican America, is indebted to such virtuous and able women as this for much of her sterling worth. "Thus is shut up,"

says quaint Matthew Henry, "this looking glass for ladies, which they are desired to open and dress themselves by."

Nor can we better close these too protracted counsels than in the words of the same writer, herself, as these quotations show, one of the wisest of the daughters of Eve, the mother of King Lemuel :

"Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain ;
But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in the gates."

This fear of the Lord you need, my young friends, because your hearts are depraved and defiled with sin. You need it that you may have a happy death-bed, you need it that you may stand accepted at the judgment to which we hasten. You need it on earth — need it for the dark hour of adversity which will lower upon you — need it in the season of concealed and secret sorrow — need it to prompt you to deeds of self-denial and charity — need it to sweeten and purify the pleasures of home, to add a new charm to your own characters, and to be a light in your earthly dwelling.

And now, young Ladies, time admonishes me to dismiss all other topics which have contended in my mind, for the honor of being introduced, at this time, to your notice. Some of you close now your academic course, your education not completed, but begun. Before you lie fields of knowledge not yet explored. Onward and upward in the culture of the powers your Creator has bestowed, we would see you move, adorning by your example our common nature ; shedding around you blessings as you pass on in life, humbly serving on earth your Father who is in Heaven, attending, like the Mary's, in all true-heartedness, at the cross and sepulchre of your Saviour, and seizing upon all opportunities of receiving and doing good.

And you that remain behind in these halls and groves, now devoted to learning, while you bid farewell with tearful eyes to those companions who will associate with you no more in these pleasant retreats, remember that you too are pressing

upon their footsteps. The golden moments and sweet days of youth are passing away. The stores of knowledge are spread out before you that you may gather them up. Feel not, in your stay here, like the prisoner in his dungeon, and go not to these studies as the slave to his task. Cheerful industry, with God's blessing, can accomplish all. Brothers and sisters are waiting to rejoice in your success; parents who have watched over you night and day in your years of infancy, to receive you again all accomplished with grace and laden with the spoils of knowledge, to their fond embrace. While the dew of your youth is upon you, hasten on in the paths of knowledge and virtue, and let it be recorded of you, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." With these words of counsel, permit me to wish you all every blessing earth can afford, and every benefit Heaven can bestow.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—“Woman’s head,” says Coleridge, “is over ears in her heart.” “The ancient Republics,” says Mrs. Sigourney, “overlooked the value of that sex whose strength is in her heart.” “Of the several faculties or aspects of human consciousness previously described, *soul* appears to be most preëminent in the mental constitution of woman; so that the prophet who said that women have no soul, proved himself thereby a false prophet. For it is even this rich fulness of soul which manifests itself in all their thoughts, and words, and deeds, that constitutes the great charm of the social intercourse of civilized nations, as well as the winning attractiveness of their more familiar conversation, and in part also the harmonizing influence which they produce on the mind in the more intimate union of wedded life. Nevertheless, I think we should altogether miss the truth, if, from any love of antithesis, we should go on to append the remark, that in like manner, mind (*geist*) generally predominates among men, and is commonly to be found in a higher degree among them than among women. For, in the first place, the measure, both of natural capacity and also of acquired culture, not only in themselves, but also in the manifold spheres and modes of their application, are so exceedingly different in different individuals, that it is not easy to form therefrom any general and characteristic estimate of the whole sex.” * * * *

“The understanding which women possess is not so much dry, observant, cool, and calculating, as it is vivid and intuitively pene-

trating. And it is exactly this vividness of intellect, that, when speaking of individuals, we call mind or spirit." * * *

"All the faculties of woman and their several manifestations lie, if I may so express myself, close together, and, as it were, in a friendly circle around the loving soul, as their common centre."—*Schlegel, Philosophy of Life*, pp. 41, 42.

NOTE B.—It is not easy to lay down for man, much less for woman, any certain metes and bounds, which shall serve as limits to the acquisition of learning, and to devotion to the life of a scholar. The mere "book worm,"

"Plunged to the hilt in learned tomes and rusted in,"

has been the theme of amusement to the satirist, from his ludicrous blunders and perfect helplessness in respect to the duties of ordinary life. It is often remarked of him, that "he has all kinds of sense but common sense." And Moliere, in his play, *Les Femmes Savantes*, has not spared the foibles of pedants of the fairer sex. The name "blue stocking," originating in the "blue stocking clubs" of 1780, [see Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson] has long been a term of reproach in the English language. It is even more noticed, and a greater reproach in woman than in man, when her pursuit of learning leads her to neglect the imperative duties of life. The circle of these duties, to her, is more narrow and circumscribed, though not less important, than those of man. And when she overlooks, neglects, scorns, or postpones them for the pursuit either of literature or fashionable dissipation, she suffers in the estimation of society. Wisdom is profitable to direct. This clashing of literary pursuits and domestic duties is not necessary. They can be adjusted wisely to each other. Elizabeth Carter, the translator of Epictetus, a proficient in the learned languages, and also in the Italian, German, Spanish and French, is said not to have neglected those domestic cares and accomplishments common to her sex, but to have devoted herself to them with becoming assiduity. Dr. Johnson thought so highly of her learning that when speaking of an eminent scholiar, he said that "he understood Greek better than any

one whom he had ever known, except Elizabeth Carter." Hannah More, also bestowed upon her merited praise :

"And Carter taught the female train,
The deeply wise are never vain."

Many ladies of noble and even of royal blood, in the Elizabethan age, and before, possessed a perfection of education rarely enjoyed since. The daughters of Sir Thos. More, Mrs. Roper and Mrs. Clement, were ladies of classical education, of noble principle and of the highest refinement. The Latin style of some of their letters is admirable. The Latin epistles of Queen Mary are praised by Erasmus. Queen Elizabeth was familiar with the Greek and Latin tongues—addressed the Polish Ambassador without premeditation in the Latin, and translated Boethius, Sallust's Jugurthine War, and part of Horace's Art of Poetry, from that language, and two Orationes of Socrates, and a Play of Euripides, from the Greek ; and Roger Ascham says of her, that "besides her perfect readiness in Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, she readeth here now at Windsor more Greek every day, than some prebendary of this church doth Latin in a whole week." Queen Catharine Parr was accomplished in polite learning. Lady Jane Grey was said to have been familiar with the oriental as well as the classical languages, and Ascham found her, when a girl of fourteen, occupied with the Phædon of Plato in the original Greek, while the rest of the family were hunting in the park. Some of her Latin epistles are yet extant, especially one to her sister, written the night before her execution, in a Greek Testament in which she had been reading. Mary, Countess of Arundel, her daughter-in-law, Joanna Lady Lumley, and the younger sister of the latter, Mary, Duchess of Norfolk, were authos of various translations from the Greek into Latin and English. The daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, Lady Burghley, Mrs. Bacon, and Mrs. Killigrew, were mistresses of the ancient and modern tongues, and the latter was celebrated for her Hebrew erudition. And yet Harrison speaks of the ladies of the Court of Elizabeth as industrious in manual labor, occupying their fingers with the needle and in spinning, "and there are none of them," he adds, "but when they be at home can help to supply the ordinary

wants of the kitchen with a number of delicate dishes of their own devising." *Hume's England, and Pictorial History of England*, Vol. II.

The instances are not few where ladies have shared in the pursuits of their husbands, who have been devoted to a life of retired study, and greatly aided them. The wife of Robt. Stephens, the celebrated Parisian printer, scholar and book-seller, was so well acquainted with Latin that she taught it to her children and servants, and there was no person in the house who did not speak the language fluently. The wife of Evelyn "excelled in the arts her husband loved, and designed the frontispiece to his *Lucretius*." Many other instances could be mentioned, among the living as well as the departed.

NOTE C.—Corinna, also, is said to have vanquished Pindar in no less than five trials, Zenobia to have drawn up for her own use a compendium of Oriental History, and Sulpicia to have excelled in Poetry. *Female Writers*, by M. A. STODART, pp. 40, 48.

